Fellowship in Prayer

"For a World United in Prayer"

Volume I April - May 1950 Number 5

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER
22 East 29th Street
New York 16, N. Y.

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FOREWORD

A formal report to our contributors was not made last month for several reasons:- One was the effort to obtain world reactions, and another cause for delay was the sifting of material for arrangement in more readable form.

Hereafter, we will follow this general form, unless you have a better suggestion.

This report is designed for those who have so graciously given to the support of this program, and we again thank each one of you.

The measure of success to be attained will be in ratio to funds available, as postage, stationery and the like cost money.

If you have friends who may be interested, we shall be glad to write them upon your advice.

We speak with assurance of the future, for we have been CONVINCED that there is no other way to offset the growing tide of irreligion, to say nothing of a more vicious ideology, but for world religions to meet on a common ground of cooperative prayer. You will find a suggestion on page 11 and we hope that you will not hesitate to suggest ways for improvement.

We believe that there are fundamental factors in any one of several world religions to remake the world, if the followers would work hard enough at it. But that cannot be expected and we must face facts. The answer is to be found in agreeing to recognize our fundamental similarities and seek God on this basis. It can work if we want it to!

It is hoped that you are all praying for the consummation of these ends.

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A TIMELY REVIEW

We have waited until after the Easter and Passover Seasons to assess the spiritual progress being made in the world today.

Reports from the far corners of the world are not at hand, but it is interesting to note what has happened in the United States and Europe.

Up to the present moment, only one single case has been noted where there has been a falling off from previous records of church and synagogue attendance. Contrarywise, there seems to have been an outpouring of people to religious services unprecidented in the world at any previous time.

Holy Week in the Christian Church and Passover Week in the Hebrew faith fell in the same week this year, and while the former is built upon the foundation laid by the latter, their beliefs and modes of worship are different, yet this year there seemed to be a closer affinity between the two. Frequent references were made to "Brotherhood" - "Fellowship" and similar sentiments.

Between Catholics and Protestants, there certainly has been a narrowing of the chasms which, at times in the past, has seemed unbridgeable.

Such information as we have received from the Moslem World indicates that Islam senses the spiritual trend and is willing to extend itself to cooperate. The writer could comment at length upon Mohammedanism, as having lived within sight of Mindanao, in the Philippines, for five years, and having been in a university where a number of Moros (Moslems) attended, he is of the opinion that there is not such a gulf of non-cooperation between other religions as is commonly supposed. Certainly, there is a deep-seated faith in Allah (God).

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PROGRESS

Our advance in the program this past month can be measured only in generalities. One outstanding factor emerging - which is definitely challenging - is the reaction among, and coming from, the professional religionist.

We cannot help but use this appellation, as there is an authoritative tone in some of our contacts which suggests the title. We have four paragraphs dealing with this subject, but have set them aside to avoid any misunderstanding.

However, we must acknowledge the fine, deep devotion and appreciation expressed by a considerable group of religious leaders. We number among them the real deep spiritual influence in America. They are the backbone of religion. Naturally, we include those who recognize the spiritual significance of "Fellowship In Prayer" and are willing to say a word of encouragement. If it is but the words penned by one of our nationally known preachers, - "Everything which deepens spiritual thinking, helps" - it is a sign of sympathetic understanding. God be praised for these contacts!

These observations are made as a recognition of the conditions we face. We cannot expect to change people's thinking in the twinkling of an eye. It can only be done by the spirit of God. We are but tools in His hands called for this undertaking.

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THE PAST

Probably the best index which can be offered is that coming from people who have had opportunity to study the program and to reach conclusions thereon. Following are a few of many quotations:

"I have no hope that any of the great religions can

command sufficient force or leadership to cope with present-day world conditions. Only concerted action by all religions on a common basis can meet the challenge." New York Banker.

"Thank you for including me in the great number who must be interested in "Fellowship In Prayer" and for the reasons which we know all too well,--the need of deeper spiritual perception of God."
A deeply spiritual lady.

"May God bless you in your efforts, for we are certainly in need of a deepening of the spiritual life of our people." Methodist Pastor.

"Thanks a lot for sending me the 'Report on Prayer.' You are doing a noble work for the Master's sake. We need more with the long range spirit of vision, so the world at large may know the still small voice."
Retired Minister.

"I am glad to see that you are doing such a good job, but of course I knew you would."
Business Management Expert.

"After all, it isn't six months yet since your article in the (N. Y.) TIMES, and I think you have accomplished a lot. I really hope for great things at our next meeting. We are being talked about now--and I don't mean unfavorably." Pacific Coast FELLOWSHIP Leader.

"You are engaged in a most interesting and important work. May the spirit of God work mightily through you." A Retired International Missionary Leader.

"May your work prosper and be blessed."
Roman Catholic Priest.

"I remember several months ago when you first told me of the need of a prayer movement, I felt a thrill because I felt that you had found the key to the

whole problem. I have been certain that you are right since you put on the letterhead, 'For a World United in Prayer.' Prayer, and more prayer, and ceaseless prayer--the only way to unite this awfully divided world." Chinese Philosopher.

"A note of joy at the good news you're able to report of progress and advance for your effort. May the days to come be even fuller of success and progress." Internationally Known Librarian.

There are many others, but these are sufficient to show the trend of thought from those who are willing to speak out.

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In addition to the foregoing, we should report that there has been steady increase in those who have expressed a desire to participate in the Prayer Program.

A fine report has been received from a meeting held on April 11th in Marin County, California. It was held in the Hebrew Center and was well attended. A very deep spiritual note prevailed and plans are being made for the next monthly meeting.

Activities in the Amsterdam (N. Y.) area clearly indicate the amount of work involved where there has been no previous groundwork. Results were meager.

Scarsdale, N. Y.

This village already possesses an organization of a type which might well be copied by others. It originated from the call to prayer issued by a deeply spiritual Presbyterian woman and the group, consisting of representatives of ALL faiths in the village, met at her home for a period. This led to the observ-

ance of the World Day of Prayer and finally blossomed out as a local Inter-Church Council. It has sponsored many projects for the spiritual betterment of the community, and has established a real fellowship among those attending the stated meetings as representatives of ALL the different faiths. The local religious leaders have become greatly interested in the organization, and the speakers and special guests at the meetings are always deeply impressed with the fine spirit of unity and fellowship.

This pattern could be followed in any community in America.

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THOUGHTS ON RELIGION

People are constantly telling us about what is being said in public or printed about "religion" particularly as a panacea for world ills. We are listing some which have been brought to our attention:

On March 28th, Senator Leverett Saltonstall (R. Mass.) said in his address at the Annual Dinner of the New York Federation of the Union of American Hebrew Congregation at the Waldolf-Astoria Hotel:--
"It is mighty important in these days that we, who may differ in our religious observances, go forward together under God toward our common goal of peace on earth and good will toward men."

At a recent meeting in Atlantic City, Professor Lawrence of Harvard University, gave an address on "Economics" to an audience of businessmen. He brought his address to a close by advising his hearers that it would be good common sense to mix some religion with their business. The one who reported this to the writer remarked that Professor Lawrence might just as well have said, "Practice the Golden Rule."

Under a date line of April 13th, "The New York Times" devotes a column under a heading, "Pakistan Stretches the Koran To Fit Modern Requirements." This special dispatch says that Pakistan is officially founded on the theory that it is a Moslem state, to be run "on Islamic principles." But in a political sense, the KORAN is being stretched to fit modern concepts and requirements.

"Task For Religion" is a Journal-American editorial headline April 12. On the same page is a full reprint of an editorial written by Bishop Thomas E. Molloy in "The Tablet" which succinctly summarizes the recent unethical disclosures in high places. The commendatory Journal-American editorial concludes:

"It appears evident that Politics will not suffice to effect a reformation at Washington. It looks as if Religion will have to perform the task, as a common non-sectarian duty."

At the service ending the Passover festival at Temple Israel (NYC), Rabbi William F. Rosenblum emphasized the "common foundations and features" of the Christian and Jewish religions. He hailed the increasing number of interfaith projects as a "march toward better understanding."

On March 28th, in "The World-Telegram and Sun," Dave Boone said:
"The world is crumbling because life's fundamental moral structure is being undermined, and this is due not alone to atheistic propaganda, but to the general lack of morality, says the Pope. People, regardless of creed, will agree, I think."

Alice Moldenhauer on April 22nd wrote about the 36 courses in religion to be offered at Columbia Uni-

versity next fall, to the effect that the new curriculum is the result of a "change of mind here, there and everywhere." Twenty years ago religion was considered a personal matter—
"Now people are beginning to accept a quite different theory, that religion has always had a profound influence upon human thought and human action, whether for better or worse, and that to attempt to leave it out is to leave half the picture of man the unknown in a shadow."

Space does not permit including all of the references accumulated this past month, but all in all, it appears that religion has a task mapped out which cannot be remotely achieved unless there is a God-led united approach by all religions. Let us pray more devoutly that this will be done.

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WHAT WE HAVE DONE

The answering of inquiries and personal conferences constitute a major drain upon time. We are glad for all opportunities to deal with questions immediately related to the program, but as adroitly as possible avoid becoming entangled in personal problems. However, prayer is the answer in the majority of questions thus raised.

Two articles for publication were prepared. One on "A Spiritual Regeneration" found publicity, while the second is held pending the development of certain studies.

New doors were opened in the Moslem-Hindu religions through names which have been furnished us. We eagerly grasp these opportunities as there are many signs that antagonisms are weakening. We welcome suggestions from any of you on any approaches in any of the world faiths.

(WHAT WE HAVE DONE, Cont'd)

Acknowledgment is made here for a fine group of names acquired recently. They have been catalogued and written to.

"Season's Greeting" postal cards were sent to a large number on our list and responses have justified the effort.

Especially important channels of approach have been opened recently and advantage was seized to tell the story of Fellowship In Prayer. Even as we write, a reply is being framed for a particularly significant opening.

The Amsterdam publicity was followed up with zeal and latest news which, at that time, seemed to be of especial importance. It took time, but in the words of one who has urged us, from the beginning, to go on, "No good seed sown in such a manner goes for naught."

Advertising copy has been prepared for other localities. Some of the material has been modeled upon a "scientific approach." What results this might produce remains to be seen, but we are willing "to be shown." This leaves the door open to any of our readers with bright ideas.

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IMMEDIATE PLANS

There is a schedule on the desk of planned calls which will occupy a month, but it is obvious they cannot be completed. We go as far as the days will permit and then overflow into the night watches.

An early meeting is scheduled to perfect arrangements to complete the incorporation of FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER. It has been delayed too long.

Copy has been prepared for new local centers, some of it having received "professional" treatment. Before efforts are started in new centers, there will be an advanced canvass of religious leaders, the results of which will determine future action.

Pressure will be increased upon all publications for the use of articles and data from FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER.

As soon as sufficient funds are available, an appeal will be made to every private school and college in the land to inaugurate a religious program and a back-to-church movement.

There is no relaxing of the effort to gain entrance to every God-worshiping religious faith. Chance acquaintanceship sometimes reveals undreamed-of opportunities. We court the cooperation of all of you toward this end.

Dr. Ernest R. Palen

Two timely sermons were broadcasted on the Sunday Radio Chapel, March 19 and 26, by Dr. Ernest R. Palen of Middle Collegiate Church, New York City. The first - "One God - One World" was based upon II Chronicles 6:32 and 33 - part of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple, wherein he prayed for the "stranger" * * "from a far country" who prayed "in this house," "that all the people of the earth may know Thy name." These latter words were made to stand out with startling vividness "as God's plan for One World."
The second - "How to Suffer" based upon Matthew 10:34 "I came not to send peace but a sword" pictured world conditions and the need for concerted efforts of re-

ligious faiths to be "completely united in the common cause of winning to God the unbelievers; of bringing into the church of their choice, the unchurched and unbelievers." This may cause us suffering, but it is worth it - even death - to help save the world for God.

In our last report, we mentioned Dr. Fosdick's sermon on "Why Religion Helps Mess Up The World." We now have in hand the cordial approval of the Curtis Publishing Company for the use of the article, but will check with Dr. Fosdick before any distribution is made.

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A PRAYER

O Lord our God we praise Thee for Thy wonderful works to the children of men. Thou madest man to have dominion over the works of Thy Hand and as stewards of Thy bounty we need Thy Help. We look to Thee as our Father, the giver of all mercies, and pray for a deeper consciousness of Thy Fatherhood, the source of all strength and power.

Instill in us now a fuller realization of the vast multitude, by whatever name they bear, who believe in Thee and in the principles of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, and hear Thou their prayers and our prayers that we may all be one in Thy sight.

Imbue us with this understanding and fill our hearts with compassion for all of these Thy children and our brethren, that Thy Kingdom may come upon earth as it is in heaven--

Amen.

FAITH--FELLOWSHIP
--FUTURE

FAITH is a priceless jewel,
Resplendent, sparkling, bright--
Moonbeams of hope, star-dust of love--
Glorifying the night.

Fellowship--a precious word,
More precious far than gold.
Just to be a friend to one
Brings blessings yet untold.

Fearless, we face the future;
To God, for guidance, we pray.
Faith fills our hearts with courage,
Fellowship leads the way.

By Edna Allen Wright.

PONDER ON THIS-- The strength of a man's determination and desire almost decide his destiny. If he does not desire earnestly and strongly to be a really good man, he has a poor chance of becoming so. That poor, cold, languid half-wish that is all many men's religion ever rises to is seldom worth anything. At any rate, it cannot lift him into the higher regions of the religious life.--Selected.

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Additional copies of this Report will be furnished at 5¢ per copy.

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[illegible] East 27th Street
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